

DASP Digest



US Forest Service International Programs
Disaster Assistance Support Program

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Highlights

DASP staff complete field assignments in Darfur, Sudan.

Forest Service supports wildfire response in Greece.

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Mohammed Salih Haroun is saving money to build a home for his family so that they can leave Otash Camp and begin a new life

DASP Digest is a quarterly report produced by the Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP), a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service International Programs and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. For more information please visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/global.

Relief Efforts in Darfur



The 4-year conflict in Darfur, Sudan, has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and driven more than 2 million people from their homes. Families have been ravaged by the fighting, which has affected more than 60 percent of the population.

That includes Mohammed Salih Haroun, an agricultural engineer who runs a seed store and agricultural consulting business in Nyala, the capitol of South Darfur. In July 2006, an Arab militia attacked and burned his family's village of Amoodh Al Akhdar. Many civilians were killed, including Haroun's 29-year old brother. The rest of his family fled to Otash, a camp near Nyala that provides shelter for about 60,000 internally displaced

people (IDPs). By helping farmers improve crop quality and yield, Haroun is supporting the restoration of livelihoods in Darfur. Meanwhile, he is saving money to build a home for his family so that they can leave Otash and begin a new life in Nyala.

Displaced families like Haroun's are assisted by the U.S. Government, the leading international donor in Sudan. Since fiscal year 2004, the United States has contributed more than \$2 billion for humanitarian programs in Sudan and eastern Chad. Through the DASP, the U.S. Forest Service has supported the humanitarian work of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) since FY 2004, providing critical staff to conduct assessments, coordinate programming, and provide needed technical assistance.

This summer, DASP core staff members Laura Chapman (June 9 – July 16) and Christine Leonardo (July 10 – August 18) served as Field Officers in Darfur, based at the USAID/OFDA Sudan Field Office in Nyala. Laura and Chris helped to implement and

monitor more than \$100 million in relief programs in cooperation with a variety of partners including United Nations Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations.

In Darfur, Chapman and Leonardo visited large camps such as Otash, Kalma, El Sereif and Al Salam where IDPs have congregated and receive humanitarian aid. They also visited existing villages, strained from hosting large populations of IDPs. At these field sites, Chapman and Leonardo met with implementing partners to monitor the effectiveness of U.S. Government relief activities, including challenges and emerging needs. This type of first-hand information helps USAID/OFDA to determine where and how to allocate resources to best address the needs of those affected by the conflict, aiming to improve the quality of life for families like Mohammed Salih Haroun's.

Sureka Khandagle, USAID/OFDA Team Leader for Darfur, said that "... I can't even begin to tell you how helpful it is to have people like Chris and Laura out here. Just knowing I can trust their judgment on anything that comes up gives me such peace of mind."





A U.S. Navy surgeon listens to the breathing of a young patient in Djibouti. (DoD photo from usinfo.state.gov)

Highlights: Detailers and Training

Detailers

- Tom Frey served as Military Liaison Officer to the U.S. Department of Defense Unified Command for Africa (AFRICOM) in Stuttgart, Germany (April 11 – June 1; June 25 – July 21; August 13 – September 30).
- Jennifer Conje served as Disaster Operations Specialist for the Sudan Regional Team (August 20 – September 30).

Training

- From May 8 – 11, DASP conducted a *DART/RMT Essentials Course* for 8 USAID/OFDA staff and 14 partners.
- From April through September, DASP provided six policy and procedures briefings for the monthly rotation of USAID/OFDA's on-call Response Management Team (RMT).

DASP Staff Training

- On April 13, Stephanie Savolaine completed *Mobile Donations Outreach Team*.
- In June, Scott Hocklander completed *Health Emergencies in Large Populations*.
- In April, Laura Chapman and Chris Leonardo completed *USAID Assistance Management*. In September, Laura completed *USAID Acquisition Management*.

Strengthening PRM Coordination

In April, Stephanie Savolaine and Laura Chapman briefed the State Department's Office of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) about the revised *USAID/OFDA Response Management Team (RMT) Policy and Procedures Manual*.

The briefing focused on the RMT Policy and Annex D (Planning Section Procedures), including the roles and responsibilities of the External Liaison Coordinator (ELC), which would be PRM's principal point of contact during an RMT activation. DASP solicited PRM feedback and input on the Planning Section Procedures, and gathered a number of helpful ideas. DASP will work with PRM to incorporate these recommendations into OFDA's regular business operations.

1. PRM would like to provide a

pre-briefing twice a year for those OFDA staff members who have signed up to serve as the ELC as part of OFDA's twice-yearly RMT rotation. The briefing would focus on PRM's mission, mandate, funding, organization, and other key details that the ELC will need to know to effectively coordinate with PRM during a major disaster response.

2. PRM will review the ELC procedures (Annex D, pages 18 - 21) and will provide input to enhance these procedures with more information about PRM. Illustratively, the procedures may instruct the ELC to contact PRM during the first days of a disaster response to request an Abacus report on PRM's partners and programs in the affected country. This will tell OFDA what programs are already in

place. PRM also plans to provide updated RefCoord directories that can be placed in the RMT's public folders as a reference for the ELC.

3. PRM feels that most OFDA staff do not have a clear idea about how they are organized and what they do, and this hampers effective coordination during DARTs and RMTs. DASP has been talking with OFDA's Training Unit and other relevant staff about designing more in-depth functional training for OFDA staff who may participate in DARTs and RMTs. DASP offered to consult with PRM when we are ready to design a training for the planning function.

The New RMT: A Family Friendly Workplace

In support of the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) family friendly workplace policies, DASP conceptualized and completed an addendum to the *USAID/OFDA RMT Policy and Procedures Manual* focused on the unique needs of parents of newborn infants and adopted children, and breastfeeding mothers.

USAID/OFDA recognizes the need for all new parents to bond with and nurture newborn infants and adopted children. As such, all employees are eligible for an exemption from RMT duty for one 6-month rotation for the birth or adoption of a child. The employee may choose whether to schedule this exemption for the

rotation during which the child's birth or adoption is anticipated, or the subsequent rotation. Longer exemptions may be granted by an employee's Division Director and the Field Support Team (FST), based on the unique needs of the employee.

Further, USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS Chapter 212) outlines a policy of breastfeeding promotion for development and relief programs overseas. USAID/OFDA seeks to protect the ability of its employees to breastfeed their infants, consistent with USAID's global priorities for maternal and child health. As such, in lieu

of the general exemption for parents of newborn infants, breastfeeding mothers are eligible for an exemption from RMT duty for two 6-month rotations in order to support successful lactation.

In scheduling these exemptions, the employee may select two rotations from among the following three: 1) the rotation during which the child's birth is anticipated, 2) the rotation following the child's birth, or 3) the second rotation following the child's birth. Longer exemptions may be granted by an employee's Division Director and the FST, based on the unique needs of the employee.



USAID/OFDA seeks to protect the ability of its employees to breastfeed, consistent with USAID's global priorities for maternal and child health.

Using the Emergency Planning Handbook

On June 12, DASP briefed OFDA's Disaster Response and Mitigation (DRM) division on the State Department's revised Emergency Planning Handbook (EPH). The purpose of the briefing was to outline what the EPH means to OFDA, how it supports our work with Mission Disaster Relief Officers (MDROs), and its usefulness for response planning.

The EPH is the principal source of guidance that posts use to develop Emergency Action Plans (EAPs). The EAP is developed to assist post, the State Department, and other agencies in responding to potential crises in the host country. The State Department requires every Foreign Service post to have an operative EAP

which includes a Mission Disaster Relief Plan (MDRP).

The MDRP provides information and guidance to posts on coordinating and managing U.S. Government assistance to foreign countries in response to natural and human caused disasters. The MDRP was formerly located in Chapter 700 of the EAP. Under the new EPH, the MDRP is located in Annex J of the EAP, entitled "*Assistance to Host Country in a Major Accident or Disaster*". It is the only component of the EAP which is not specifically focused on disaster impacts within the US Mission or on US citizens.

The MDRP is divided into 3 sections: disaster history (slow

and rapid onset), capacities (host government, non-governmental organizations, and donors), and emergency contacts. Each post is required to designate an MDRO who is OFDA's focal point and is also responsible for preparing and maintaining Annex J.

DASP maintains a Mission Disaster Preparedness (MDP) e-room on the OFDA.gov website which includes a database with MDRO and Alternate MDRO contact information. Please feel free to update the database as new information is received or forward changes to Chris Leonardo, Mission Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, at cleonardo@usaid.gov.

How Can I Get a Copy of an MDRP?

Showing Value: Successes Large and Small

- On April 30, DASP released an FY 2006 Annual Report with the theme "*Striving for the Greatest Good*".
- On May 3, Scott Hocklander completed an eight-week TDY to Nairobi, Kenya where he provided coverage for the Somalia disaster response portfolio (March 12 – May 3). In describing

DASP Supports Fire Response in Greece

The 2007 wildfire season in Greece killed 76 people, destroyed nearly 3,000 buildings, and burned 327,000 hectares with significant human, agricultural and economic losses. On August 27, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Thomas Countryman declared a disaster, opening the door for USAID/OFDA assistance. Initially, USAID/OFDA arranged for emergency relief supplies, including approximately \$650,000 in fire protective equipment accessed through the DASP agreement. USAID/OFDA also provided funding for two interagency technical assistance teams to work with Greek counterparts to respond to post-burn situations and strengthen disaster preparedness capacities.

US Forest Service experts in Fire and Aviation Management and Burned Area Emergency

Response traveled to Greece as part of the USAID/OFDA-funded aid package.

As part of the first team (September 2 – 8, 2007), USFS Director of Fire and Aviation Management Tom Harbour, Fire Aviation Officer Jim Boukidis, Soil Scientist Annette Parsons and DASP Program Manager Stephanie Savolaine worked with Greek counterparts to assess the impact of the wildfires and evaluate potential hazards created by newly burned terrain. Noting the extreme climatic conditions that fueled these historic fires, this team identified a number of areas at potentially high risk from subsequent debris flows, landslides and wash-outs during the upcoming rainy season.

To prevent further loss of life and property, the team



recommended US Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) tools and processes to help Greece address potential post-fire hazards. The team also identified a variety of management system and coordination issues that would provide fertile ground for future collaboration. Follow up activities will be described in future newsletters.



"The types of conditions that the Greeks faced here simply were extraordinary."

~ Tom Harbour

MDRP Incorporates Lessons Learned

Kitty Andang, Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) in the Republic of Benin, recently collaborated with DASP Mission Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Chris Leonardo to update the Mission Disaster Response Plan (MDRP) for her Post.

She found the technical assistance to be extremely helpful as she worked to consider the risks and vulnerabilities facing this West African country, which

is located on the Gulf of Guinea and has a population of about eight million people.

Kitty explains that "...as a new MDRO, the guidance, collaboration and excellent support I received from OFDA was critical to my submitting a thorough and useful MDRP update.

"The 'lessons learned' part was particularly challenging, Benin has not experienced a

large number of disasters over the years, and even fewer requiring USG assistance.

Providing generic lessons learned for each type of disaster, however, will help us to develop appropriate disaster responses in the future."

Benin's final MDRP is available on the State Department's *classnet* system.



"The guidance, collaboration and excellent support I received from OFDA was critical."

~ Kitty Andang, Mission

Disaster Relief Officer, Benin

U.N. Joint Logistics Center Workshop

DASP staff members Laura Chapman and Scott Hocklander attended a United Nations Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) workshop in Stuttgart Germany from May 21-25, 2007. The objective was to provide a basic orientation to UNJLC, which is an inter-agency Humanitarian Common Service. Its mandate is logistics information management support and services. UNJLC provides a platform for gathering, collating, analyzing, and disseminating logistics information and manages commodity tracking and prioritization services.

UNJLC operates under the custodianship of the U.N. World Food Program, which is responsible for its administrative and financial oversight, and is funded from voluntary contributions. UNJLC relies heavily on staff secondments to fill positions at its core unit in Rome and field office in Juba, Sudan. Future deployments may be staffed by training

participants including representatives from donor governments, U.N. agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

The training included modules on the three main aspects of UNJLC's mandate: Joint Supply Tracking and Prioritization, Geographic Information Systems and Infrastructure Assessment, and Information Management. Other sessions focused on the logistics cluster and UNJLC's Sudan operation. Group discussions deliberated the role of UNJLC vis-à-vis other U.N. Agencies with corresponding

responsibilities for humanitarian coordination. A final simulation organized by the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief focused on security in the field.

The workshop served as an excellent opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of UNJLC and its mission, and develop personal relationships between logisticians who may serve together in future emergencies. Laura and Scott routinely provide backstop to OFDA's Logistic Unit both in Washington and in the field, and look forward to the next opportunity to work with UNJLC.

For more information about

UNJLC please visit their website

at <http://www.unjlc.org/>.



Getting AFRICOM on the Right Track

Our last DASP Digest announced the retirement of our colleague and friend Tom Frey. But as we suspected, Tom returned under contract to the DASP as a Short Term Assistance Retiree (STAR) to provide support to USAID/OFDA's Operations Liaison Unit.

During a six-month assignment (April through September 2007), Tom represented USAID/OFDA with the U.S. military in Stuttgart, Germany. The military is developing a new combatant command for Africa called AFRICOM, currently headquartered in Stuttgart.

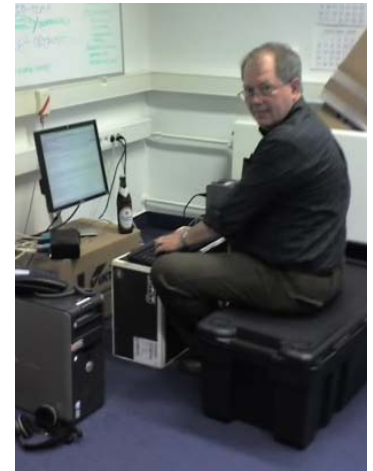
President Bush directed the military to develop a command that will *"strengthen our security*

cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa." With that direction, AFRICOM planners are developing an adaptive and non-traditional combatant command that intends to collaborate very closely with the interagency community as well as NGOs and international organizations. The AFRICOM structure will have both a civilian deputy and a military deputy to the commander to further emphasize its non-traditional role.

AFRICOM staff members are planning for activities that will potentially include support to

humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) efforts. Many of the military planners on the AFRICOM staff are not familiar with the mandate, responsibilities, and procedures of USAID/OFDA.

Tom's focus was to ensure that objectives, organizational structure, and procedures established by AFRICOM clearly identify that AFRICOM's role will be *in support of* USAID/OFDA and other humanitarian agencies. We feel confident that Tom's efforts have helped put AFRICOM on the right track.



Tom Frey's work in Stuttgart has helped AFRICOM understand and define its role in international humanitarian response.

Fire Tools Assist Paraguay Responders

As of mid-September, wildfires in northern Paraguay had destroyed approximately 150,000 hectares of crops, pasture, and forest, affecting at least 9,000 families, according to estimates by the Government of Paraguay (GOP). The fires began due to a lack of rainfall in the preceding months, compounded by intense heat and slash and burn agriculture.

On September 12, the GOP declared a national emergency due to fires in Amambay, Canindeyu, Concepcion, and San Pedro departments. The GOP sent 120 firefighters and approximately 500 soldiers to control the fires, and provided food to affected populations.

On September 13, U.S. Ambassador James C. Cason declared a disaster due to the effects of the wildfires. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 through USAID/Paraguay for firefighting equipment and humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

In addition, USAID/OFDA accessed the DASP agreement to procure and ship firefighting equipment to Paraguay. The equipment was accessed through the USFS Northern California Fire Cache in Redding, California. The DASP coordinated with USAID/OFDA's regional team

for Latin America and the Caribbean and OFDA Logistics to facilitate shipment. Valued at approximately \$175,000, the equipment included protective clothing such as Nomex shirts, pants, helmets and safety goggles; shovels; rakes; water pumps; fire hoses; and weather observation kits.

USAID/OFDA also deployed a forest fire specialist from its regional office in Costa Rica to conduct assessments and determine needs, in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion and USAID/Paraguay.



US Forest Service
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Best Wishes, Gary Barrett!

Gary has been an integral part of the DASP for almost ten years, and has worked on nearly every aspect of this team's portfolio.

In recent years, Gary spearheaded the redesign of a dynamic, updated *DART/RMT Essential Course*, collaborating closely with USAID/OFDA's Training Unit. He is known as a vibrant instructor, able to engage the interest of a diverse audience with humor and aplomb. Gary has also offered a tremendous amount of creative energy to the DASP team, helping to map new directions for training, systems and detailer support.

On August 3, 2007, DASP said farewell to longtime colleague and friend Gary Barrett who will be heading to Sudan to head up the U.N. Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) Field Office in Juba.

Gary's eleven month assignment with UNJLC will bring him back to Washington, DC next July, when he will assume a full-time position in the U.S. Forest Service Office of International Programs. At that time, Gary will become a resource to USAID/OFDA, accessible through the DASP detailer program. Until then, Gary will be sorely missed by the DASP, our detailers and our colleagues at USAID/OFDA.

We wish Gary the best of luck in this exciting, new assignment!